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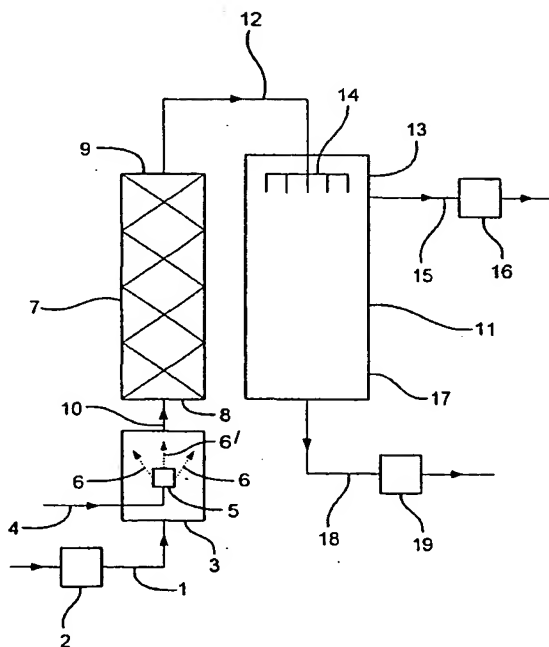
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(54) Title: PROCESS AND APPARATUS FOR DEGASSING A POLYMER



(57) Abstract: The present invention relates to a process for stripping residual volatile compounds contained in a thermoplastic polymer. The process comprises (1) forming the polymer in the form of a melt flowing as a main stream, (2) forming a foaming agent in the form of one or more secondary liquid streams, (3) adding the secondary stream(s) to the main stream by spraying so as to divide each secondary liquid stream into several fractional streams and thus to form a polymer melt/foaming agent pre-mixture, (4) introducing the pre-mixture into a static mixer, then into an expansion chamber at reduced pressure so as to separate the polymer melt from the residual volatile compounds and from the foaming agent, and (5) withdrawing the polymer melt from the expansion chamber. The invention also relates to an apparatus for removing residual volatile compounds contained in a thermoplastic polymer. The apparatus comprises (i) a polymer melt feed line, (ii) an addition chamber into which the feed line runs and through which the polymer flows as a main stream, (iii) one or more lines for adding a foaming agent as one or more secondary liquid stream(s), which lines run into the addition chamber and have at their ends a spray device allowing each secondary liquid stream to be divided into several fractional streams, (iv) a static mixer having an inlet, connected to the addition chamber, and an outlet, and (v) an expansion chamber for separating the polymer melt from the residual volatile compounds and from the foaming agent, which chamber is connected to the outlet of the static mixer and is provided with a line for withdrawing the polymer melt and with a line for extracting the residual volatile compounds and the foaming agent.

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